



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State Officials Urge Californians to Prepare for Hot Summer Weather**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Even though summer has just begun, state officials today urged Californians to take steps now to prepare for any prolonged heat waves that may occur this year. Employers should also review their heat illness prevention programs and remind employees the importance of protecting themselves.

“Every Californian can reduce their risk of heat-related death or illness this summer by taking time now to review and update their emergency plans, learn first aid and CPR, restock their emergency supply kits, particularly their drinking water supplies, and create a cooler environment to beat the heat,” said Cal EMA Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen.

Because drinking fluids is essential to avoiding heat exhaustion, heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses, officials strongly suggested that Californians include plenty of drinking water in their emergency supply kits.

Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) echoes Bettenhausen’s call to action. “Californians enjoy some of the sunniest weather in the nation,” said Horton, “but we should be aware of sun and heat exposure risks and be prepared. When temperatures rise quickly – particularly in regions that don’t typically have extreme heat – there are numerous health issues that can arise,” said Horton.

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health, better known as Cal/OSHA, investigations show that in 80% of the cases in which suspected heat illness occurred, the employer did not have a heat illness prevention program. Heat illness is preventable. Preventing heat illness protects your workers and is good business. Health and safety problems and other health problems like heart attacks and falls may result from heat illness at the workplace.

With the heat also comes increased demand on the state’s power grid. The California Independent System Operator Corporation (ISO) 2010 [Summer Assessment](#) indicates adequate electricity to meet this summer’s expected peak demand, but a quick moving wildfire or excessive heat could change that. Experts say that taking steps now can reduce your energy expenses and prepare you for unexpected power outages.

As part of their emergency planning efforts, officials also recommend Californians consider the needs of family members and neighbors, who are elderly, have physical impairments and other unique needs.

“Infants, small children, seniors, people with illnesses and those who are taking certain medications could be at additional risk to heat-related illnesses,” noted Dr. Mark Horton. “Now, not when the temperatures start to rise, is the time to obtain extra medications and special foods, to teach relatives or neighbors to operate life-safety equipment and to arrange for someone to check on those who are living alone or have special needs.”

For summer heat resources, please visit Cal EMA at [www.calema.ca.gov](http://www.calema.ca.gov). Additional health tips can be found on the California Department of Public Health website at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).

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Other helpful links:

- [Flex Your Power](#)
- [Energy Saving Tips](#)
- [CDC Heat Illness Prevention Tips](#)
- [Cal OSHA Heat Prevention eTool](#)
- VIDEO: [Cal/OSHA Video - Protect Yourself Against Heat Stress and Illness](#)

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